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Concl*

setting means for setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface in accordance with said obtained placement information; and

synthesis means for combining said plurality of images by using the mapping mode set by said setting means.

11. (Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having recorded thereon a program for implementing a computer-implementable image synthesis method for combining a plurality of images, said program comprising:

a placement information obtaining step of obtaining placement information about a plurality of images in which adjacent images have a common subject region;

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a setting step of setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface in accordance with said obtained placement information; and

a synthesis step of combining said plurality of images by using the mapping mode set in said setting step.

14. (Amended) An image synthesis method conforming to a plurality of mapping transformation modes, comprising:

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cont*

a setting step of setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface;

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a generation step of generating, prior to synthesizing a plurality of input images, coordinate-space transformation parameters for transforming a coordinate space of one image among the images into a coordinate space of another image; and

an image synthesis step of combining the images based on a given mapping mode and the coordinate-space transformation parameters.

18. (Amended) An image synthesis apparatus conforming to a plurality of mapping transformation modes, comprising:

setting means for setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface;

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generating means for generating, prior to synthesizing a plurality of input images, coordinate-space transformation parameters for transforming a coordinate space of one image among the images into a coordinate space of another image; and

image synthesis means for combining the images based on a given mapping mode and the coordinate-space transformation parameters.

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22. (Amended) A computer-readable storage medium having recorded thereon a program for implementing a computer-implementable panoramic image synthesis method conforming to a plurality of mapping transformation modes, said program comprising:

a setting step of setting one mapping mode out of a plurality of mapping modes each corresponding to a different mapping surface;